CHAPTER 9

WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a means of organizing system development activities based on system and product decompositions. The systems engineering process described in earlier chapters produces system and product descriptions. These product architectures, together with associated services (e.g., program management, systems engineering, etc.) are organized and depicted in a hierarchical tree-like structure that is the WBS. (See Figure 9-1.)

Because the WBS is a direct derivative of the physical and systems architectures it could be considered an output of the systems engineering process. It is being presented here as a Systems Analysis and Control tool because of its essential utility for all aspects of the systems engineering process. It is used to structure development activities, to identify data and documents, and to organize integrated teams, and for other non-technical program management purposes.

WBS Role in DoD Systems Engineering

DoD 5000.2-R requires that a program WBS be established to provide a framework for program and technical planning, cost estimating, resource allocation, performance measurement, and status reporting. The WBS is used to define the total system, to display it as a product-oriented family tree composed of hardware, software, services, data, and facilities, and to relate these elements to each other and to the end product. Program offices are to tailor a program WBS using the guidance provided in MIL-HDBK-881.

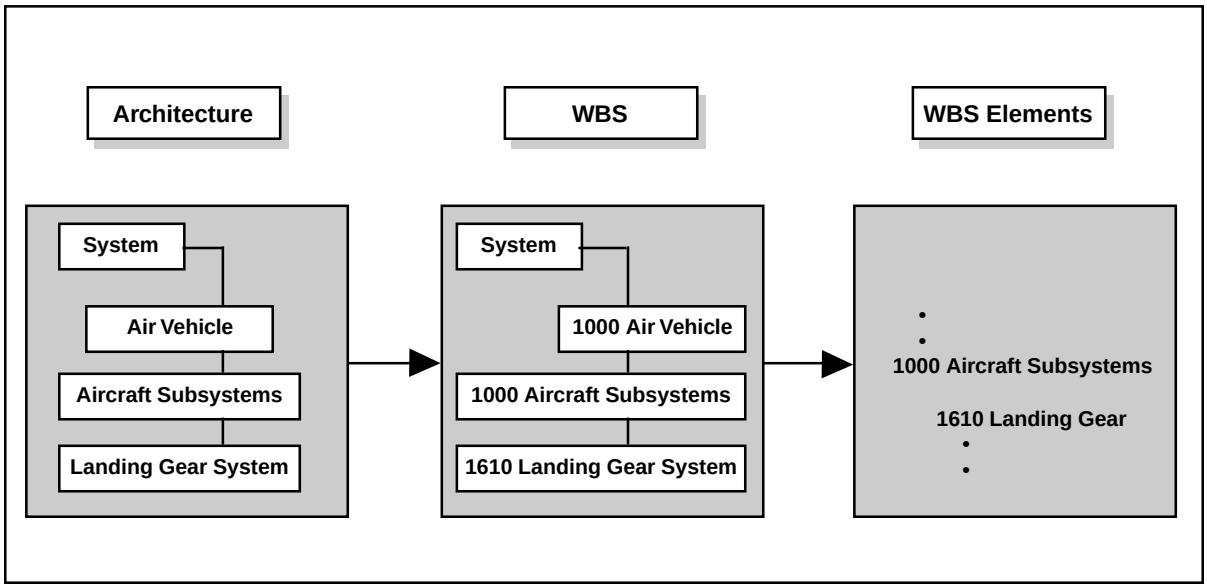

Figure 9–1. Architecture to WBS Flow

The program WBS is developed initially to define the top three levels. As the program proceeds through development and is further defined, program managers should ensure that the WBS is extended to identify all high-cost and high-risk elements for management and reporting, while ensuring the contractor has complete flexibility to extend the WBS below the reporting requirement to reflect how work will be accomplished.

Basic Purposes of the WBS

Organizational:
The WBS provides a coordinated, complete, and comprehensive view of program management. It establishes a structure for organizing system development activities, including IPT design, development, and maintenance.

Business:
It provides a structure for budgets and cost estimates. It is used to organize collection and analysis of detailed costs for earned value reports (Cost Performance Reports or Cost/Schedule Control System Criteria reporting).

Technical:
The WBS establishes a structure for:

- Identifying products, processes, and data,
- Organizing risk management analysis and tracking,
- Enabling configuration and data management. It helps establish interface identification and control.
- Developing work packages for work orders and material/part ordering, and
- Organizing technical reviews and audits.

The WBS is used to group product items for specification development, to develop Statements of Work (SOW), and to identify specific contract deliverables.

WBS – Benefits

The WBS allows the total system to be described through a logical breakout of product elements into work packages. A WBS, correctly prepared, will account for all program activity. It links program objectives and activities with resources, facilitates initial budgets, and simplifies subsequent cost reporting. The WBS allows comparison of various independent metrics and other data to look for comprehensive trends.

It is a foundation for all program activities, including program and technical planning, event schedule definition, configuration management, risk management, data management, specification preparation, SOW preparation, status reporting and problem analysis, cost estimates, and budget formulation.

9.2 WBS DEVELOPMENT

The physical and system architectures are used to prepare the WBS. The architectures should be reviewed to ensure that all necessary products and services are identified, and that the top-down structure provides a continuity of flow down for all tasks. Enough levels must be provided to identify work packages for cost/schedule control purposes. If too few levels are identified, then management visibility and integration of work packages may suffer. If too many levels are identified, then program review and control actions may become excessively time-consuming.

The first three WBS Levels are organized as:

Level 1 – Overall System
Level 2 – Major Element (Segment)
Level 3 – Subordinate Components (Prime Items)

Levels below the first three represent component decomposition down to the configuration item level. In general, the government is responsible for the development of the first three levels, and the contractor(s) for levels below three.

DoD Practice

In accordance with DoD mandatory procedures in DoD 5000.2-R and common DoD practice as established in MIL-HDBK-881, the program office develops a program WBS and a contract WBS for each contract. The program WBS is the WBS that represents the total system, i.e., the WBS that describes the system architecture. The contract WBS is the part of the program WBS that relates to deliverables and tasks of a specific contract.

MIL-HDBK-881 is used by the program office to support the systems engineering process in developing the first three levels of the program WBS, and to provide contractors with guidance for lower level WBS development. As with most standards and handbooks, use of MIL-HDBK-881 cannot be specified as a contract requirement.

Though WBS development is a systems engineering activity, it impacts cost and budget professionals, as well as contracting officers. An integrated team representing these stakeholders should be formed to support WBS development.

WBS Anatomy

A program WBS has an end product part and an enabling product part. The end product part of the system typically consists of the prime mission product(s) delivered to the operational customer. This part of the WBS is based on the physical architectures developed from operational requirements. It represents that part of the WBS involved in product development. Figure 9-2 presents a simple example of a program WBS product part.

The "enabling product" part of the system includes the products and services required to develop, produce, and support the end product(s). This part of the WBS includes the horizontal elements of the system architecture (exclusive of the end products), and identifies all the products and services necessary to support the life cycle needs of the product. Figure 9-3 shows an example of the top three levels of a complete WBS tree.

Contract WBS

A contract WBS is developed by the program office in preparation for contracting for work required to develop the system. It is further developed by the contractor after contract award. The contract WBS is that portion of the program WBS that is specifically being tasked through the contract. A simple example of a contract WBS derived from the program WBS shown in Figure 9-2 is provided by Figure 9-4. Figure 9-4, like Figure 9-2, only includes the product part of the contract WBS. A

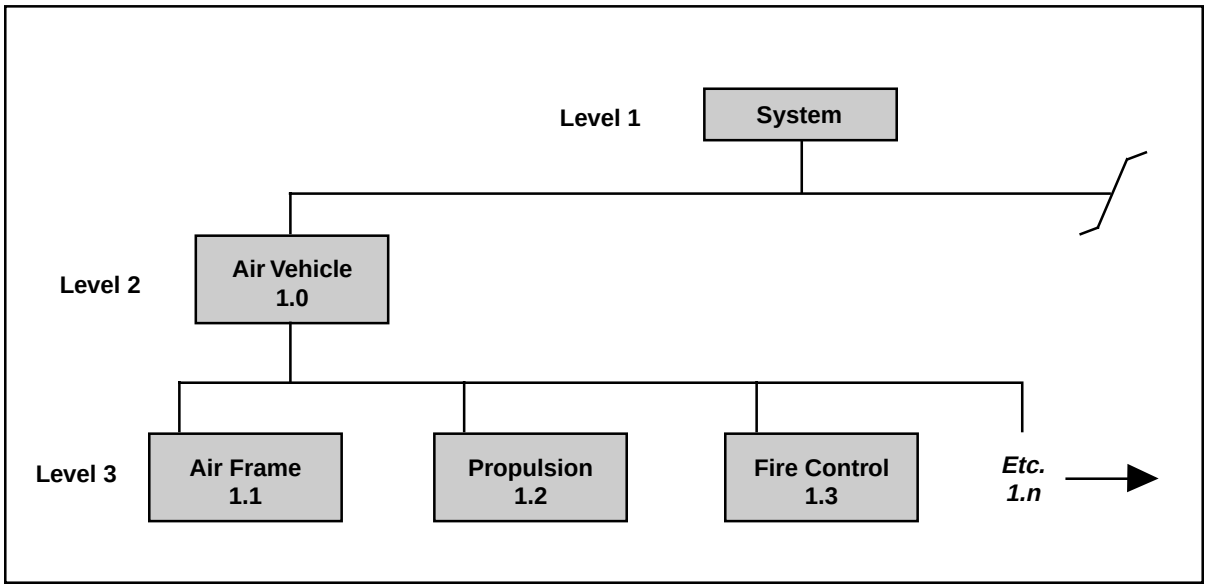

Figure 9-2. Program WBS – The Product Part (Physical Architecture)

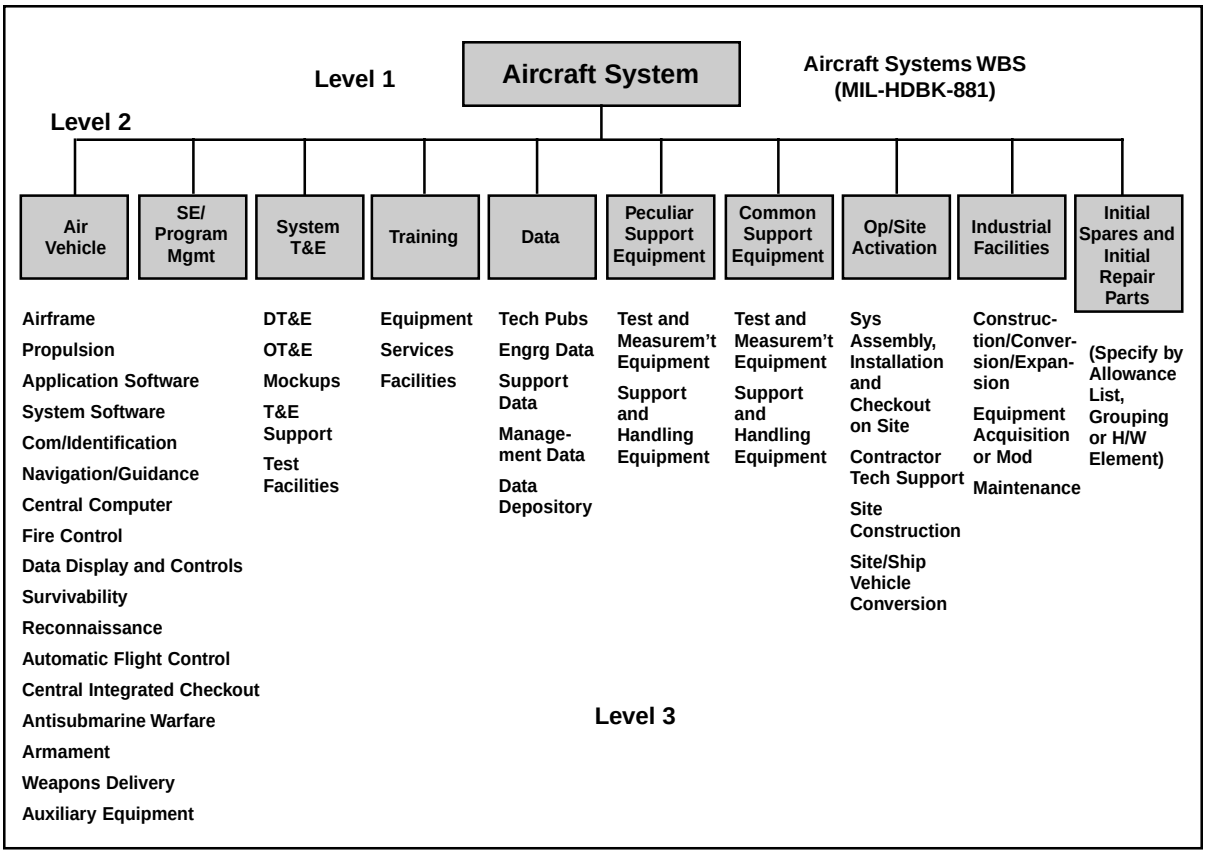

Figure 9-3. The Complete Work Breakdown Structure

complete contract WBS would include associated enabling products, similar to those identified in Figure 9-3. The resulting complete contract WBS is used to organize and identify contractor tasks. The program office's preliminary version is used to develop a SOW for the Request for Proposals.

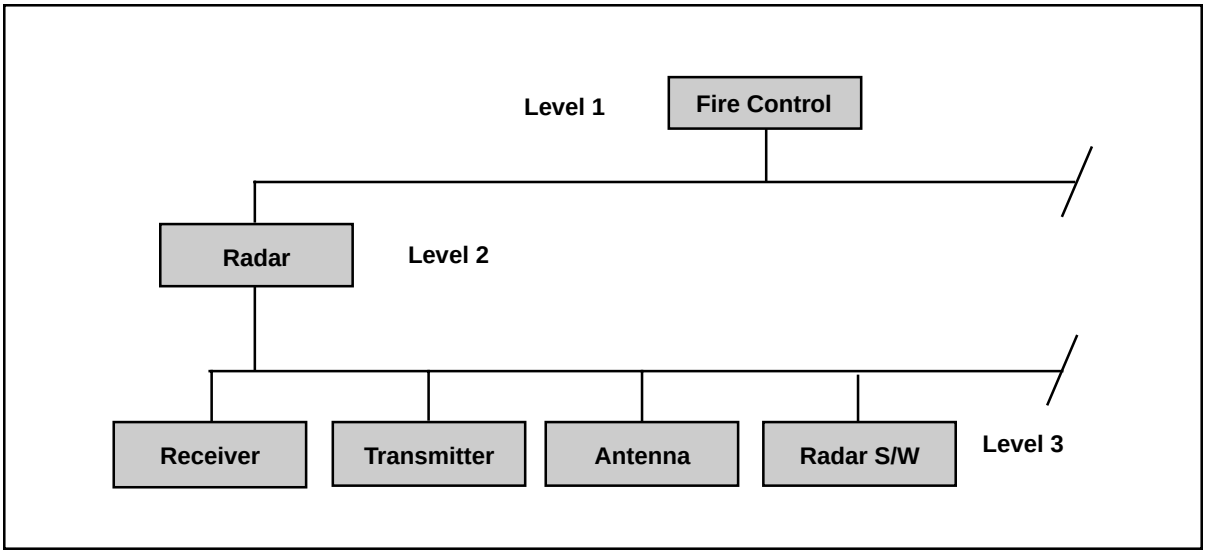

Figure 9–4. Contract WBS

9.3 DESIGNING AND TRACKING WORK

A prime use of the WBS is the design and tracking of work. The WBS is used to establish what work is necessary, a logical decomposition down to work packages, and a method for organizing feedback. As shown by Figure 9-5, the WBS element is matrixed against those organizations in the company responsible for the task. This creates cost accounts and task definition at a detailed level. It allows rational organization of integrated teams and other organizational structures by helping establish what expertise and functional support is required for a specific WBS element. It further allows precise tracking of technical and other management.

WBS Dictionary

As part of the work and cost control use of the WBS, a Work Breakdown Dictionary is developed. For each WBS element a dictionary entry is prepared that describes the task, what costs (activities) apply, and the references to the associated Contract Line Item Numbers and SOW paragraph. An example of a level 2 WBS element dictionary entry is shown as Figure 9-6.

9.4 SUMMARY POINTS

- The WBS is an essential tool for the organization and coordination of systems engineering

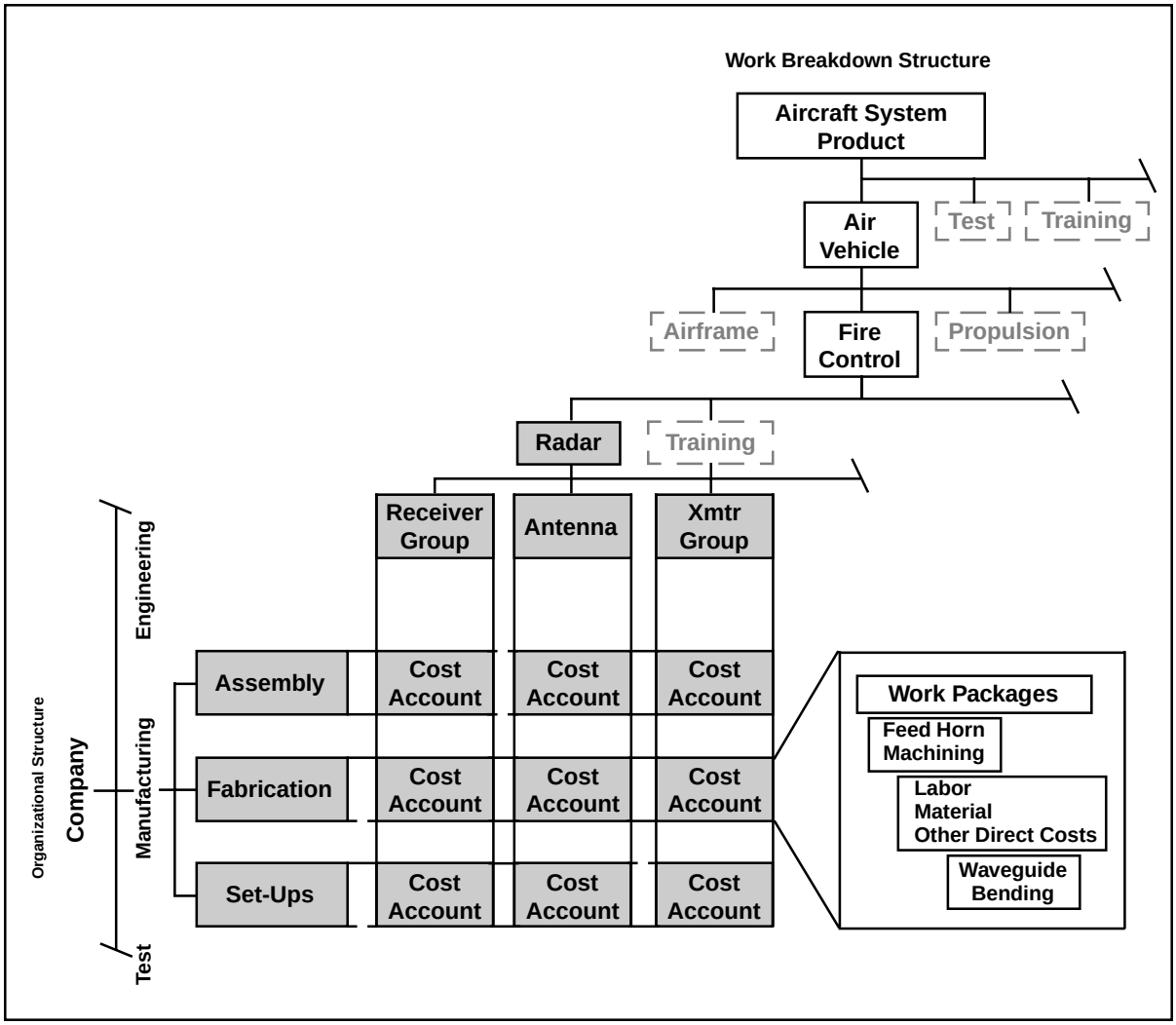

Figure 9-5. WBS Control Matrix

Index Item No. 2		WBS Level 2		CONTRACT NUMBER F33657-72-C-0923
WBS Element A10100		**WBS Title** Air Vehicle		**Contract Line Item:** 0001, 0001AA, 0001AB, 0001AC, 0001AD 0001AE, 0001AF, 0001AG, 0001AH
Date Chg	**Revision No.**	**Revision Auth**	**Approved**	
Specification No. 689E078780028		**Specification Title:** Prime Item Development Specification for AGM 86A Air Vehicle/ Airframe		

Element Task Description

Technical Content:

The Air Vehicle element task description refers to the effort required to develop, fabricate, integrate and test the airframe segment, portions of the Navigation/Guidance element, and Airborne Development Test Equipment and Airborne Operational Test Equipment and to the integration assembly and check-out of these complete elements, together with the Engine Segment, to produce the complete Air Vehicle. The lower-level elements included and summarized in the Air Vehicle element are:

Airframe Segment (A11100), Navigation/Guidance Segment (A32100), Airborne Development Test Equipment (A61100), and Airborne Operational Test Equipment (A61200).

Cost Description

MPC/PMC	**Work Order/Work Auth**
A10100	See lower level WBS Elements

Cost Content – System Contractor

The cost to be accumulated against this element includes a summarization of all costs required to plan, develop, fabricate, assemble, integrate and perform development testing, analysis and reporting for the air vehicle. It also includes all costs associated with the required efforts in integrating, assembling and checking our GFP required to create this element.

Applicable SOW Paragraph
3.6.2

Figure 9-6. Work Breakdown Dictionary

processes, and it is a product of the systems engineering process.

- Its importance extends beyond the technical community to business professionals and contracting officers. The needs of all stakeholders must be considered in its development. The program office develops the program WBS and a high-level contract WBS for each contract. The contractors develop the lower levels of the contract WBS associated with their contract.

- The system architecture provides the structure for a program WBS. SOW tasks flow from this WBS.

- The WBS provides a structure for organizing IPTs and tracking metrics.